

**JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA  
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS**

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**Report**

TO: Members of the Judicial Council

FROM: William C. Vickrey, Administrative Director of the Courts  
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DATE: January 27, 2005

SUBJECT: Status Update on Statewide Administrative Infrastructure Initiatives  
(Informational only)

Issue Statement

Pursuant to prior direction of the Judicial Council, trial courts and the AOC have worked collaboratively to make substantial progress over the past couple of years in developing and implementing a statewide administrative infrastructure for the delivery of support services to the trial courts. Initiatives in the area of financial services, human resources, information technology, and legal services have progressed to various stages of development and/or implementation, with many predicated on participation by all courts. Those statewide initiatives already implemented have already proven to be of critical value to the trial courts as they continue to transition away from county-provided services. This report is being presented to the Judicial Council to provide a status update on the various statewide initiatives currently underway.

Background

When trial court funding was implemented, there wasn't an adequate administrative infrastructure to support court operations statewide; resources were inadequate, policies and procedures had not been developed, and in many areas the necessary expertise and experience did not exist.

At the local level, nearly every trial court system had been dependent on the counties to provide administrative services and support. A few courts did develop an administrative infrastructure to support specific areas of court operations, but no trial court had developed a comprehensive infrastructure to fully support day-to-day operations. This, of course, varied from county to county and was highly dependent on a variety of factors, particularly the court's relationship with the county, specific interests or needs of the court, available funding, etc. The situation at the local level became more and more

pronounced as counties began significantly increasing the cost of their administrative support or completely withdrawing their services from the courts.

Consistent with the goals of state funding and expectations of the legislative and executive branches, the Judicial Council has sought to establish an administrative infrastructure at the state and local levels. This infrastructure would provide appropriate accountability for the legally compliant, effective, and efficient use of resources; provide the necessary information to support policymaking responsibilities; and consistently and reliably provide the administrative tools to support day-to-day court operations. Additionally, courts had requested an expedited decision-making process to facilitate their ability to make effective local decisions that are consistent with the state level decisions on delivery of administrative infrastructure. Court executive officers felt this would limit the likelihood of expending unnecessary effort and expense to develop systems that would later be abandoned upon implementation of a statewide system. Moreover, the council has not approved policy changes or budget requests that alter its position on the decentralized management of trial courts.

As mentioned earlier, the Judicial Council has previously directed staff to develop and to implement strategies for statewide administrative infrastructure initiatives in the areas of financial services, human resources, information technology and legal services in the trial courts. The council has also denied new funding in some areas, such as in legal assistance, where they would duplicate services that are already being or will be provided on a statewide basis; council members also raised questions as to whether it is appropriate to permit courts to reallocate base budget resources to fund services where they would either duplicate or be inconsistent with services that are being provided on a statewide basis.

At its April 2002 meeting, the Judicial Council provided direction to AOC staff to develop a comprehensive administrative infrastructure for the trial courts and to take steps not to duplicate resources so that resources could be redirected to other needed areas. This direction was reaffirmed in the August 2002 meeting with the discussion of the Trial Court Shared Administration Services Pilot Program.

Further, at its February 2003 meeting, the Judicial Council reaffirmed the past policy approach to development and implementation of statewide administrative infrastructure initiatives in the areas of financial services, human resources, information technology, and legal services. Council actions included the following:

- Reaffirm its previous direction to staff to continue developing trial court fiscal accountability initiatives and seek the necessary resources to implement the statewide rollout plan for the trial court financial system known as CARS, to provide sufficient resources to support the Trial Court Accounting Processing

Center that supports CARs, and to develop a centralized statewide treasury for use by all trial courts.

- Reaffirm its previous direction to staff to continue developing trial court technology initiatives and seek the necessary resources to provide a statewide Technology Center for use by all courts as appropriate, to stabilize courts with critical needs, to focus on a select number of viable case management systems, and supports and urges the continued development and implementation of the California case management system as quickly as possible as the statewide case management system intended for use by all courts.
- Reaffirm its previous direction to staff to continue developing statewide human resources initiatives and seek the necessary resources to provide Trial Court Benefits and Workers' Compensation Programs, to implement statewide systems to support Trial Court HR needs and Judicial Branch Succession Planning, to conduct Trial Court Fast Track Training and Human Resources Conference, and to implement the Trial Court Interpreters Program (Senate Bill 371);
- Reaffirm its previous direction to staff to continue developing a program and seek the necessary resources to provide comprehensive legal services for the courts, with the intent that all courts will eventually obtain their legal services solely through the AOC.

During the February 2003 meeting, the Judicial Council also established the following policies:

- AOC Staff shall continue to work together with the trial and appellate courts and provide periodic updates to courts on the development and implementation of statewide administrative services;
- Trial courts interested in pursuing an alternative to a statewide approach shall obtain the review and approval of the Administrative Director of the Courts before proceeding;
- Requests for new funding will not be approved when a statewide approach for delivering the service is available; and
- AOC staff shall make recommendations to the council to redirect funds no longer needed for the delivery of an administrative service when a statewide approach is implemented; recommendations should provide options that support statewide services and permits reallocation of the savings to other unfounded mandates in the local court, or if none, to other trial courts.

Since that time, the trial courts and the AOC have made significant strides in the development of an administrative infrastructure to support California's trial court system.

#### Trial Court Financial Services Initiatives

As a steward of public resources, the judicial branch has continued to build trust and confidence in local communities by developing innovative yet cost-effective methods for delivering court services. Recent examples of trial court financial services initiatives include:

- Implementation of a new trial court financial system known as the Court Accounting and Reporting System (CARS);
- Establishment of Trial Court Accounting and Financial Services (formerly known as the Trial Court Accounting Processing Center) located in Sacramento; and
- A centralized treasury for trial courts.

These actions were part of the overall approach taken to implement a statewide judicial branch financial system, that included (1) creation of a trial court financial policies and procedures manual, (2) establishment of an internal audit unit, (3) installation of a standardized statewide accounting software system, (4) establishment of an accounting processing center, and (5) establishment of a centralized treasury.

#### *Court Accounting and Reporting System*

The Court Accounting and Reporting System (CARS) is the new financial system being developed for all 58 trial courts using SAP, internationally recognized financial systems software. CARS will standardize accounting functions in the judicial branch to provide all required parties with timely and comprehensive financial information. To date, CARS has been implemented in 17 trial courts with an additional 15 courts currently scheduled to come on-line in FY 2005–2006. The final rollout is scheduled to be complete in fiscal year 2008–2009.

#### *Trial Court Accounting and Financial Services*

Launched in conjunction with CARS, the Trial Court Accounting and Financial Services unit—formerly known as the Accounting Processing Center—was designed to support the back-end processing requirements of CARS, with other services relating to invoice payment processing, contract management, procurement, fixed assets, trust accounting, and maintenance of trial court financial information. As the CARS rollout continues, the Trial Court Accounting and Financial Services unit will continue to expand service delivery options available to the trial courts.

#### *Treasury Services*

The AOC Finance Division recently established the Treasury Services unit. Treasury Services maintains responsibility and oversight of the trial courts' complex investment

transactions and the preservation of capital enabling trial courts to meet their operating needs, with current priorities focused on short-term investments and cash management. This unit will also be responsible for the complex centralized banking contract with Bank of America for delivering cash management and other services to the trial courts.

#### Trial Court Information Technology Initiatives

In response to trial court technology needs and in support of the judicial branch's 2000 Strategic Plan and the Tactical Plan for Court Technology, a number of critical technology initiatives were identified. This included:

- Establishment of a Technology Center to provide the courts with comprehensive information technology support services;
- Telecommunications;
- Data exchange standards; and
- Achieving an integrated, statewide case management system.

#### *California Courts Technology Center*

The judicial branch's first statewide technology center began operations in 2003. In 2004, the technology center began hosting 13 courts on the new Court Accounting and Reporting System (CARS - SAP) system. The technology center provides comprehensive information technology support services for courts' certified court management systems, help desk services, applications support, and network, security, and disaster recovery services. Trial courts will continue to migrate to the Technology Center based on a statewide assessment of their current technology environments, court-county relationships, and their levels of service.

#### *Telecommunications*

The telecommunications project, begun in 2002, continued in 2004 to upgrade courts to create a standard infrastructure for communication among the courts, technology centers in the judicial branch, the AOC, and other justice partners. To date, 38 courts have completed telecommunications upgrades in support of the technology infrastructure set forth by the Judicial Council. The telecommunications project addresses cabling, network hardware and software, circuits, network security and training. The benefit to the courts is that their networks have become more stable and can deliver information more efficiently.

#### *Data Exchange Standards*

The Technical Standards for Data Exchange project developed standards for seven high value exchanges between the court and justice partners. These exchanges are an initial part of the effort to develop a comprehensive set of standards, initially focusing on criminal exchanges and are in conformance with the newest version of GJXDM, a XML standard developed through the federal Office of Justice Programs and gaining

widespread acceptance by justice partners at the federal, state, and local levels. They include:

- Arrest and Bench Warrants—issuance of arrest and bench warrants by the court;
- California Highway Patrol (CHP) Citations—receipt of citation data into the court from law enforcement, using the CHP citation as a starting point;
- Court Calendar—publishing adult criminal and traffic court calendar data to justice partners and the public;
- Criminal Complaint—filing of a criminal complaint from the district attorney to the court;
- Judgment and Sentence Order—provision of court judgment and sentence information to local justice partners;
- Register of Actions—publishing adult criminal and traffic court registers of action (case event history) data for public and justice partner access; and
- Domestic Violence Restraining Order and Criminal Protective Order—an exchange that represents events that could occur in either civil (restraining) or criminal (protective) case types.

These standards will be used as the basis for developing information exchanges between the courts and justice partners when transitioning to the California Case Management System and utilizing the Integrated Services Backbone, both of which will be hosted in the California Courts' Technology Center.

#### *California Case Management System*

The California Case Management System (CCMS) represents a multi-year effort with two phases currently under way—development of a criminal and traffic module as well as a module to handle civil, probate, and small claims. Six courts, the Superior Courts of Alameda, Los Angeles, Orange, Sacramento, San Diego, and Ventura Counties, lead the community's participation in the project to ensure that CCMS is designed to manage all case types for state trial courts. CCMS will be operated from the branch's shared services environment, The California Courts Technology Center.

*Criminal/traffic module* - The criminal and traffic system initially developed by the Superior Courts of Orange and Ventura Counties was installed at the Technology Center in July 2004. Deployment planning began in August and has resulted in the first planned implementation of CCMS traffic and criminal functionality at the Superior Court of Alameda County in the spring of 2005.

*Civil/probate/small claims* - In January 2004, the CCMS project team began the design and development of the California Case Management System modules relating to civil, small claims and probate cases. With much of the design work completed, deployment

activities will be initiated in four courts in FY 2004–2005 with an additional eight courts scheduled for implementation in FY 2005–2006.

### Comprehensive Legal Services

The AOC's Office of the General Counsel (OGC) provides legal services to both trial and appellate courts in the following areas: litigation management, employment law and labor relations, advice on court administration issues, and transactional support.

- Pursuant to statutory mandate and rules of court, OGC attorneys hire and oversee outside counsel to represent the courts in all litigation against them;
- For transactional matters, one transactional attorney is dedicated to assisting courts in technology contract matters and one transactional attorney provides direct assistance to courts and hires and oversees outside counsel;
- OGC attorneys provide advice to the courts on labor and employment issues, sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly, by advising the staff members of the AOC's Human Resources Division who assist the courts;
- OGC attorneys provide legal advice on court administration issues, occasionally utilizing outside attorneys with specialized expertise; and
- Attorneys in the newly established Real Estate Unit provide legal services to implement the Trial Court Facilities Act of 2002 and oversee outside counsel engaged to assist in the transfer of court facilities from county to state responsibility.

The benefits of providing comprehensive legal services through the AOC include the following:

- Economies of scale: a staff of attorneys who are knowledgeable and experienced in the matters affecting trial courts can do the work more efficiently;
- Consistency and uniformity of legal advice provided to trial courts;
- Ability to address issues of statewide importance, to the benefit of the court system as a whole, by developing legislation, rules, or statewide policies and recommending best practices; and
- Reduction of risks and liabilities.

Providing uniform, consistent legal services to all courts through a statewide legal office at the AOC (including the regional offices) is the most effective and cost-efficient means of addressing the courts' needs in this area, and would allow some of the funds that have historically been used by the trial courts for legal services to be redirected to more critical needs.

### Human Resources Initiatives

The AOC Human Resources Division (HR) began the design, development and implementation of several statewide initiatives over the past couple of years, to include:

- Trial Court Benefits Study/Program
- Trial Court Workers' Compensation Study/Program
- Trial Court Master Payroll Services Contract
- Trial Court HR Needs and HRMIS Study

#### *Trial Court Benefits Study/Program*

The objectives of the study were to research, design and implement a statewide, multi-employer trial court employee benefits program. The outcome of the study was a comprehensive and competitive health and benefits program alternative for trial court employees who could be legally exclude from county benefit programs.

This study was completed and the Trial Courts Benefits Program was effective on January 1, 2003. As of January 1, 2005, 24 courts were participating in the program. Modifications and enhancements to the plans are being made as needed to meet the evolving needs of the trial courts.

#### *Trial Court Workers' Compensation Study/Program*

The objectives of this study were to research, design and implement a statewide, multi-employer trial court workers' compensation program. The outcome of the study was a self-insured workers' compensation program administered by a third party. As of January 1, 2005, fifty-three (53) courts were participating in the self-insured Judicial Branch Workers' Compensation Program (JBWCP).

#### *Trial Court Master Payroll Services Contract*

A master agreement was signed with ADP in August 2002. This agreement provides the courts with an alternative to the county service for processing payroll. As of January 2005, 20 trial courts were utilizing this service.

#### *Trial Court HR Needs and HRMIS Study*

A comprehensive study of human resources needs in the trial courts was completed and presented to court representatives in January 2003. Fifty-two trial courts participated in this study. One of the recommendations from this study was the need to implement a statewide human resources management information system (HRMIS). A separate HRMIS assessment was conducted with the trial courts and various AOC staff members representing the Education, Finance, Human Resources, and Office of Court Construction and Management Divisions. The objective of the HRMIS assessment was to develop a comprehensive understanding of the trial courts' HRMIS requirements; this was completed in October 2004. At that time, a project team was formed to begin the



development and implementation of a statewide human resources system known as the Court Human Resources Information System (CHRIS). Since that time, a contract has been executed for implementation services to be provided as preparations for the statewide rollout of this system continue.

It is important to note that both the statewide HR system (CHRIS) and the trial court financial system (CARS) are designed to run on SAP. As a result of utilizing a single software platform for both systems, both long-term efficiencies and cost savings are anticipated.

Staff will continue to provide periodic updates to the Judicial Council on these and other critical initiatives representing the key components of the comprehensive service delivery model being established for California's trial courts.